

# Pam Maynard, Olympic Gymnast In Bud

By Joanne Young

If you have ever wondered how a young person becomes an Olympic competitor, this story of one Cohasset ten-year-old tells the tale.

Pamela Maynard is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Maynard of Locust Road. When Pam was seven years old, her father decided that since her sister Peggy played piano, Pam should "do something" too. Because she was so interested in Gymnastics at the Meadowcroft Day Camp in Norwell, that "something" became for her a world class sport.

She was enrolled for three years in the Kathy Corrigan Gymnastic school in Rockland, and advanced so quickly, her parents realized she needed elite training. Mrs. Grossfeld, three times an Olympian and 18 times U.S. National

Champion, was so impressed with Pam, she accepted her into the program, and Pam is now part of the cream of America's current young crop of Olympic hopefuls.

Only one out of 100 applicants to this school are accepted. The criteria, according to Mrs. Grossfeld, are a straight, strong back, well-proportioned limbs, flexibility, willingness to learn and accept criticism, and drive.

Each of the 14 girls boarding at the Milford school is an accomplished gymnast in the uppermost, or "elite" class, reserved for international competitors. To understand the awesome extent of Pamela Maynard's talent, you must realize that of the approximately half a million girls training in 10,000 schools and clubs in the United States, there are only about 120 elite gymnasts, and only three

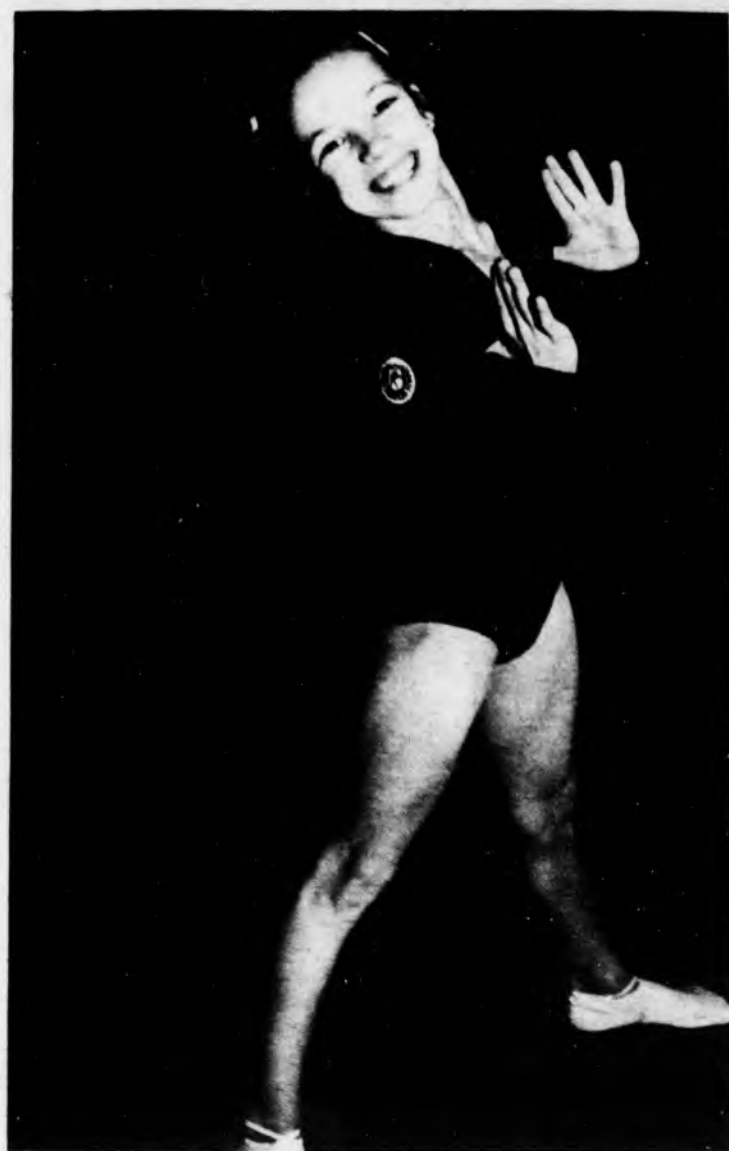
places where they can live and train. One is in Oregon, one in Louisiana and the third is Grossfeld's.

Pamela's day begins with a strictly controlled weight-watchers type breakfast. She is in fifth grade classes at St. Mary's School for a morning session, and from 1 to 6 p.m., she works out at the gym. Lunch and dinner are also well-planned meals. For five days a week, this is Pam's schedule. On the weekends she frequently takes part in competitions or exhibitions. Pam was not scheduled to compete when she first entered the Grossfeld school last July, but she needed to see immediate results of her work, and the awards and trophies motivated her.

Pamela qualified in the March 4th meet in New London, Conn.; on March 24th at the State meet in New Britain, Conn., and April 7th at the Regional meet held at Queens College in New York. To qualify, a gymnast must receive 64-68 points, depending on the meet. There are severe eliminating procedures and the number of gymnasts involved becomes very limited.

Pam competes in an event rated by ability and not age, so her sins are all the more spectacular. She is scoring the same points as her 13-year-old classmates. Her excellent scores gave her a chance to go to the Nationals in Penna., where she will compete against the top 40 gymnasts in the U.S. The deterrent to her competing in the 1980 Olympics is her age - she must be 13 years old to qualify.

Pam's home displays her many trophies: the gold medal for the Federation Regional Championships in vaulting, beam and floor exercises; a silver medal for the uneven bars; another gold for all-around winner in four events



Pam Maynard

in the All-New England Regionals; the Anderson Artistic Gymnastic Trophy for the 6th Class Open, and winner of the Conn. State Championships. Her difficult routine includes back walkover layout, two consecutive front aerials, one-handed front and back walkovers, side aerial and handstands.

Pam is so young, she gets lonely for her parents and sisters, Peggy, 12, Martha, 5, Victoria, 2 and her brother John, who is 4. Her mother says: "I miss her so much, too." Pam will celebrate her 12th birthday while she is competing in Florida, so her mother sent her a bathing suit, and will have a party when Pam next comes home.

While in Florida, she will take part in an exhibition at Disney World. It is a poignant combination of loneliness and pride for this young daughter, who will one day make all the sacrifice and hard work into a dream fulfilled.

When Muriel Grossfeld decided to groom Pam, it involved great sacrifice for the Maynards. Every 14 weeks, the family spends a weekend as houseparents in the Milford, Conn. dormitory. Gymnastics is not a heavily-endowed sport in this country. By scoring so high (69.55 points out of a possible 68) in the Regional competition, Pam was awarded a check toward her travel to the sectional meet in Florida on May 4, 5 and 6. The top 40 scores in the Junior division (age 14 and under) will advance to the Nationals in Pennsylvania in June. Cohasset wishes Pam good luck in achieving this next goal.

The Olympic Creed states: The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part. The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well. Pamela Maynard and her family embody the true value of this creed in their own lives.

## 'Ask Beth' At Jr. High

Beth Winship, author of the newspaper column, "Ask Beth" and a book by the same title, will speak to junior high and senior high school students Wednesday, May 16, at 2:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Parish House.

Beth will talk about topics of interest to this age group. She will also answer questions from boxes located in the high school library and the Cohasset Public Library.

All Cohasset young adults are invited to submit their questions to these boxes.



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